Ku bea (shaving). Then razors are brought in to shave their hair. 585
The nachimbusa shaves the wife, the shibukombe, the husband. They [302]
are then annointed with oil for the great mashikulo ceremony.

Mashikulo (Presents and Instructions). Preparation. A mat is spread 585
out on the square, on which a small seat /chipuna/ is placed with a child, a little boy and a little girl, sitting on either side. These two children hold up the little seat with their hands. A parade hatchet /sembe ya mbafi/ is also brought.

The women fetch the wife /nabwinga/, who is dressed up, from the hut and place her on the mat. The men fetch the husband /shibwinga/ leading him by the arm. He sits down on the chipuna next to his wife and between the two children /nshindishi/. He holds the hatchet in his hand. The nachimbusa takes a bow and places it on the wife's legs. Then shouts of joy are uttered by all the villagers, and everybody exclaims: "Bashichisungu bafuma." Everybody gathers together.

Recommendations. The fiancée's father steps forward holding an arrow 585
in his hand, and addresses his daughter with the following words: "My 837
daughter, I give you this man, whom you have known, the one who comes to you at night /kuirwa/ is this man; it is bad for the wife to go to other husbands at night /kuirirwa/.... do not cast your eyes upon other men." He then turns to his son-in-law and says to him: "You are my son-in-law, I recognize you, you are the one who has married my daughter." He then stabs his skin slightly with an arrow shouting: "If anyone takes advantage of your wife, you will kill him and he will be unable to defend himself." The chieftains will declare him a "ngulube" who died because he wanted to steal. "Tatusamba nweno shibili" (One does not wash two wedding vessels), i.e. marriage is one [581]
and indissoluble.

Then it is the turn of the wife's mother to step forward and give 581
advice: "My daughter, be faithful in working for and obeying your 585
husband." She then turns /pindulukira/ to her son-in-law and says to him: "Take care of me and also your wife, do not cast your eyes on other women. The husband must keep his eyes on the road where his wife treads.... /22/ if he notices that she is late in coming, he must go to meet her as a sign of conjugal love."

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241 trial and error lines as regards the cultivation of these mounds.
242 In April 1933 at Munuka, near Citimukulu, the headman had about 300 beds of cassava which looked stunted. The villagers had moved out into *imitanda* in the bush to look for new soil. At Shikafyola, near Nkula, I saw, in November 1933, soil turned up by the river and then abandoned. It was found to have lumps of clay inside and said to be too hard to work.[1]

At Kacienja, near Shiwa Ndandu, I saw the headman planting some of his mounds with cassava in 1930, and trying each strip in turn apparently, until I visited him again in 1933 and found him still unsuccessful. These are admittedly only isolated observations made during years when the Government was making the planting of cassava compulsory, and when the natives were given no special instructions as to the handling of what was still, to them, a somewhat unfamiliar crop. But there is additional evidence to show that failure is not unexpected when mounds are planted. Natives use a special word, *ukupanza*, which means to 'try the soil'. It is common when building a new village to dig up one hillock or two in the surrounding land and to plant it with different crops. If they bear well, the soil is regularly hoed next year. In November 1933 Chief Nkula told me he had a few *mputa* round the village, and was starting to try the soil by the river for cassava. 'We shall
813 keep on looking for soil on which to plant,' he said.[2] At Kungu
241 village, near Kasama, an enterprising old lady, who was employing
242 two male labourers on the proceeds of the sale of milk, had the whole slope of a hill dug with mounds on which she was putting ground-nuts, beans, maize, and cassava. She called this 'to try at random' (*ukweshya pambilibili*) and told me that as a result of her experiment she was convinced that nothing but sweet potatoes would succeed on that ground. Bemba also frequently plant maize on new mounds where it cannot succeed and hence they are bound to fail in the first year.

As regards the millet gardens failure is rarer, and a man's choice of soil much freer, but I have seen half-cleared gardens abandoned because 'the trees did not seem thick enough where I began to cut', and in March 1934 I noted that two out of the twelve gardens made by the Citimukulu failed completely. Some natives said that
• [837] it was because the owner of the garden, one of the chief's wives, had committed adultery, and others that the millet must have been
sown on top of a site long abandoned.

[1] *Bemba makani. Kwalikesangwasha.* [2] *Twakulanshya uko tukalima.*

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777 into the bush with their baby to save the community from danger.

783 The penalties which fall on those who come in contact with
372 polluted fire are always envisaged as illnesses, mainly of the chest
783 (*ci/subs*) and such complaints are very common in Lubemba as we saw. It is important to notice too that the punishment falls on the innocent and not the guilty. The adulterous woman who touches her hearth-stone causes her husband to fall ill 'of the chest' if he accidentally comes near the fire. The father who is 'impure' through illicit intercourse 'kills his child with fire' (*ukwesaipaya umulilo*) so that the baby starts to waste away and then to die.

581 The reader will have gathered that strong mystic links are
768 thought to exist between husband and wife. Though marriage
783 appears unstable in Lubemba compared with the unions contracted by some of the patrilineal Bantu in South Africa, yet the destinies of husband and wife are mysteriously joined. If one partner dies, the other must sleep with some social equivalent of the dead—a brother or uterine nephew or a maternal grandson in the case of a dead man, or a sister or granddaughter in the case of a dead woman. This is to 'take the death off' the living partner. A member of the dead man or woman's matrilineage has to fetch back his or her spirit from the living spouse and makes him or her free to remarry.

833 But this is only one example of the belief that the guardian
826 spirit (*mapashi*) and the blood of man and woman mix in sex
• 837 relationships. Women of loose morals in Northern Rhodesian towns are said to bear few children because they 'mix the blood' of Bemba and men of other tribes. Again, a man who sleeps with two women unites the three in a relationship that is magically perilous. The blood is mixed (*mulopa wasakanya*). If woman *A* commits adultery with *B* and the legitimate wife of *B* sees the blood of *A* from a scratch, a tattooed mark or during menstruation, then she, the guiltless partner, will die at once unless saved by the right medicine. So also if *X*, a man, sleeps with the wife of *Y*, and *Y* sees the blood of *X* by misadventure, then *Y*, the guiltless partner, will die.

833 For mother and daughter to sleep with the same man, albeit
837 unknowingly, is a terrible thing. For an adulterer to pass the dead
691 body of his mistress's husband, or any other man who has slept

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with her, is also a danger to all the men concerned. These triple relationships are constantly mentioned in court cases and are made the subject of claims by the injured family of a dead man or woman who declare that 'their child' has been killed in that way. They recur in narratives of the rather lurid sex lives of Bemba princesses who are expected to take many lovers, but must not bring trouble on the land by simultaneous relations of this kind.

Lastly, in common with many Bantu peoples, Bemba believe that, if a man commits adultery while his wife is pregnant, the baby is born dead. He has taken the spirit of the child (*asendo umupashi wa umwana*). If the woman is unfaithful while she is pregnant, then she herself dies in childbirth unless she confesses and gets medicine in time.[1]

I have dilated on this system of attitudes and beliefs because I think it fundamental to the understanding of Bemba puberty ritual and also because it cannot fail, I think, to strike the field-worker in this area as one of the basic elements of tribal dogma. It would be impossible to live long in a Bemba village without running constantly across instances of the effects of these beliefs whether in terms of ritual or in the most practical problems of cooking, catering and entertaining. If the Bemba can be said to have an ideological obsession in the sense that they are constantly pre-occupied with one set of fears, it is this belief in the magical potency of sex, fire and blood. Such emotional attitudes set us puzzling problems. In this chapter I shall confine myself to stating them. Later in the book I hope at least to suggest some hypotheses which may stimulate comparative research in other tribes holding similar beliefs.

To recapitulate, Bemba dogma stresses the role of the ancestors in determining human fortunes as well as the power of injured spirits, who revenge the injustices they suffered on earth on the

[1] It will be seen from the above that the causes of barrenness or death in childbirth are numerous among the Bemba. Barrenness may be due to the special curse of the father's sister; to an injured spirit returning to punish a descendant at random; to allowing the umbilical cord of a baby to fall to the ground; to adultery; or to witchcraft. Miscarriage is thought to be due to an injured spirit shaking the womb of the pregnant woman so that the baby falls out; when it occurs all the women of the matrilineage must be treated with medicine. Death in childbirth is due to the adultery of the mother herself.

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769 living. It also emphasizes the magical powers associated with sex
831 which is linked with feelings of guilt and anxiety expressed in the taboos clustered round marriage, childbirth and the rearing of children. This feeling of guilt is so widely diffused that innocent
[783] people are thought to suffer from the magical results of a sex misdemeanour committed by someone else.

581 These beliefs support the institution of marriage since safety
789 from magical danger is acquired by means of a ceremony which can
●837 only be carried out by a man's head wife. No Bemba supposes that a husband will be kept from adultery by this means, but the legal wife is the only person who can secure him and those near him from the resultant punishment.

622 The reader is asked to bear in mind, without attempting further
372 analysis, the association that exists in Bemba ideology between
831 chieftainship, fire, sex and power to influence the fertility of the
789 land and its people, and to remember that these powers are hurt
753 by blood, intercourse out of marriage, death, murder, lion-killing and all cold, terrible or 'bad things' (*ifbi*). Fertility which is so much desired is produced by conduct pleasing to the ancestors, and to senior and especially paternal relatives, the blessings of persons in authority and the carrying out of the ritual of marriage. Illness is inflicted usually on the innocent party, by sex relations out of marriage without ritual purification, by bad conduct, and because of injury to people who, since they have died in a state of righteous indignation, will 'come back' to haunt the family which did them wrong.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

642 The most characteristic features of the Bemba social structure
611 are its hierarchical and authoritarian type of government, of which
591 the apex is a paramount chief believed to have supernatural powers; and its system of matrilineal descent with uxorilocal marriage.

643 The political structure of the Bemba is a centralized one. Its unity under a single head, the *Citimukulu*, was achieved, in 1931 at any rate, because of a belief in the spiritual powers the king was

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562 often becomes imperious and managing and obviously enjoys her position as she sits on the verandah of a large hut, directing operations and dividing food. This is the position a woman achieves by a stable marriage, and one which she longs to achieve.

833 Sex relations are openly desired by Bemba and celibacy for men or women is not admired. A girl who rejects men is criticised as having 'pride of the womb' (*cilumba ca mumba*). Abstinence is only practised for ritual reasons, by a woman nursing a child, for instance. Adultery in women was, however, savagely punished in
● 837 the old days and is a cause of divorce. It is still thought to cause death in childbirth. Men are not very seriously criticised for adultery although it is thought a terrible crime for them to 'kill' their children by not submitting to the purification rites.

462 The two sexes are divided in everyday life as regards their work
264 and recreations. Men sit in their own shelter at night and eat together there. Women, on the other hand, are grouped round their own house verandahs. Men have their own economic tasks and
593 women theirs. Girls do not enter marriage with any ideal of companionship with their husband. A young couple is not expected to show affection in public and a bridegroom tends to be despised for spending time with his wife. But affection grows over the years in the cause of a stable marriage.

593 There are certain obvious contradictions in the husband's
562 position. Menfolk are dominant in Bemba society. Women used to
[576] greet men kneeling, and they still do so on formal occasions today. Men receive the best of the food and take precedence at beer drinks and on other social occasions. They speak first in family matters. Men are expected to take the initiative in sex affairs. Women are married (*ukwupwa*—the passive form) while men marry (*ukwupa*—the active form). Girls are taught to please their husbands and are considered responsible for giving them pleasure in sex relations. Women calmly accept the fact that their husbands will beat them 'when they are young and their hearts get hot quickly'.

593 The contradiction between the masterful male and the sub-
562 missive son-in-law, between the secure young married woman backed by her own relatives and the submissive kneeling wife, is one which first struck me forcibly in the course of the chisungu

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Appendix B

[539] x 881 535

Fulwe tanina;	The tortoise does not climb;
Lelo anina ku mukolobondo.	But today it is climbing the *mukolobondo* tree.

Interpretation. The tortoise does not naturally climb trees. If he climbed he would be breaking away from old habits as the girls will have to do, now that they are married. He is climbing up backwards. The *mukolobondo* tree is one with a very smooth bark which is very difficult to climb, but its fruit is very sweet.

Kasonde contributes: 'If you say you do not know how to do these impossible things, how can you keep house? How can you live? All right, we shall teach you today to do such things whether you like it or not.' Other informants specified in what way the girl was to do the unusual or impossible, i.e. by getting the firewood if needed, although that is reckoned as a man's job. One *nacimbusa* contributed the idea of reticence as expressed by this song. If the [837] husband commits adultery, the wife must say nothing about it, but just ignore it, however difficult. Nkonde, as usual more in accord with European ideas of morality, added: 'You say you never do a thing but when the testing time comes your resolve breaks down and you do a thing against your habit, like the tortoise, who suddenly started to climb a tree.' Another interpretation is that given for song 50 of the tortoise which sticks out its head when visiting, i.e. asks for food, and puts it in when at home, i.e., conceals food.

No. 11. *The monkeys climb.* The girls pretend to bite at a maize cob with their mouths (p. 72). They sing:

[539]

Kolwe kulya kwakwe,	The monkey eats everything,
Kwa mutali shya;	It put us in difficulties;
Eya nine ku mukolobondo.	That's why he climbs the mukolobondo.
No. 12. *Kolwe ita nyina.*	The monkey calls its mother.

Interpretation. The monkey is here represented as foraging for food. He is also, like the tortoise, climbing the smooth bark of the *mukolobondo* tree. Explanations given by the women were concrete, i.e., that the girls should imitate monkeys because they eat everything on trees and they forage for food for the family as the